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LB 740

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, this is the act on school violence and its prevention that I have designated my priority bill for the year. It's been reported out of the Education Committee. Essentially, the bill is a body of money for demonstration grants. That body of money is \$250,000 a year for five years. The demonstration grants would be applied for either by a school district or an ESU. They are to be evaluated by the State Department of Education which is to choose among the potential applicants the ones that would receive the grants. The attributes that they would be looking for would be that it was well designed, that it was comprehensive, that it was districtwide as opposed to a single school inside a district, but the district...district-wide, rather, and sustainable over time. In the event that it was an ESU that applied, the ESU would have to have at least three of its school districts that it represented and it would also be in collaboration with a mediation center. And in the event a school district applied, it would be documentation that would demonstrate collaboration with a local ESU or a mediation center and that the applicants would provide that to the Department of Education. There's a provision in for data collection as well. It also says that 50 percent of the money appropriated in any single year can be used by grantees for preimplementation activities, and that means consulting with school safety and security committees, developing assessment and evaluation instruments. It means providing in-service training for teachers or staff who might be having a responsibility under the program, assisting in preparing and implementing a conflict management program, providing parent education or training, providing education sessions for school board members, community organizations, as we got ready to implement a school violence prevention program. Understand that although this would be in collaboration with ESUs and mediation centers or schools and mediation centers, there is no obligation to contract with the mediation center to provide any particular services. There are organizations that would assist. There are existing programs that one could contract with and there's no obligation to do that with a mediation center. By the way, you'll find that I am on my feet a rather good deal of the time on conflict resolution issues, and on occasion I'm asked what my own personal interest is. I am not a mediator for hire, I'm not an arbitrator for